United Nations A/AC.109/2089

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 June 1997

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

Caribbean Regional Seminar to review the political, economic and social conditions in the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories, held at St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 21 to 23 May 1997

Rapporteur: **Mr. Lamuel A. Stanislaus (Grenada)**

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97-17329 (E) 090797

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I. Introduction

1. On 22 November 1988, the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/47, entitled "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism", which read in part as follows:

> *"The General Assembly,*
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Declares* the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism;
>
> "2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a report that would enable the Assembly to consider and adopt an action plan aimed at ushering in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism."

2. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991 entitled "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism", and the plan of action contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/634/Rev.1 and Corr. 1) aimed at ushering in, in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism, in which, *inter alia*, it requested the Special Committee to organize during the Decade seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions alternately, as well as at United Nations Headquarters, to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan of action, with the participation of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, their elected representatives, the administering Powers, Member States, regional organizations, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and experts.

3. In its resolution 51/146 of 13 December 1996, the General Assembly approved the programme of work of the Special Committee envisaged for 1997, including, *inter alia*, the holding of a seminar in the Caribbean region, to be organized by the Committee, and to be attended by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

4. As stated in the guidelines and rules of procedure for the Seminar (A/AC.109/2073), the purpose of the Seminar was to assess the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly their constitutional evolution towards self-determination by the year 2000. The Seminar was also to identify areas in which the international community could increase and enhance its participation in the programmes of assistance and adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure the political and sustainable socio-economic development of the Territories concerned.

5. The topics considered by the Seminar will assist the Special Committee and the participants in making a realistic evaluation of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Seminar gave pre-eminence to a broad range of views of the peoples of those Territories. It also secured the participation of organizations and institutions that are actively involved in the political, economic and social development of those Territories and of non-governmental organizations with long and established experience in island Territories.

6. The contributions of the participants served as a basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar to be carefully studied by the Special Committee with a view to submitting proposals to the General Assembly concerning the fulfilment of the objectives of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000.

II. Organization of the Seminar

7. The Seminar was held at St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 21 to 23 May 1997.

8. The Seminar held six meetings in which representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories, an administering Power, States Members of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, regional organizations and experts took part. The list of participants is given in annex III to the present report.

9. The Seminar was conducted by Mr. Utula Utuoc Samana, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee, with the participation of the following other members of the Special Committee: Antigua and Barbuda, Côte d'Ivoire, Grenada, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Sierra Leone and Syrian Arab Republic. Portugal participated in the Seminar in its capacity of administering Power.

10. At the 1st meeting, on 21 May 1997, the following representatives were appointed officers of the Seminar: Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda) as Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Lamuel A. Stanislaus (Grenada) as Rapporteur and Chairman of the Drafting Committee. All Member States participating in the Seminar were appointed members of the Drafting Committee.

11. The agenda of the Seminar was as follows:

(a) Constitutional developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories within the context of the exercise of the right to self-determination;

(b) The role of the Special Committee in assisting the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the democratic processes of popular consultations in the Territories;

(c) Legitimate options for self-determination and their modalities, including forms and methods of popular consultation aiming at ascertaining the wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories regarding their future political status and the role of the United Nations in that regard;

(d) Ways and means of overcoming particular circumstances facing Non-Self-Governing Territories, including lack of socio-economic progress and illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, money laundering and smuggling of funds, which impede the exercise of the right of self-determination;

(e) The rights of indigenous populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories within the context of the exercise of the right to self-determination;

(f) Strengthening of cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers with a view to assisting the Non-Self-Governing Territories in constitutional evolution towards the exercise of the right to self-determination;

(g) Participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in regional and subregional organizations as an important means of attaining sustainable socio-economic development and political advancement;

(h) Political education of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, with particular emphasis on the options for future political status available to them in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

III. Conduct of the Seminar

A. Proceedings of the Seminar

12. The Seminar was called to order at 10 a.m. on 21 May by Mr. Utula Utuoc Samana in his capacity as Chairman of the Seminar. Ambassador Samana introduced the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, The Honourable Lester Bryant Bird.

13. The Honourable Lester Bryant Bird opened the Seminar and delivered his address, which is reproduced *in extenso* in annex I to the present report.

14. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Special Committee made an opening statement, which is reproduced in annex II to the present report.

15. At the 4th meeting, held on 22 May 1997, the participants in the Seminar adopted by consensus the following text of a letter addressed to the Secretary-General:

> "The participants of the Caribbean Regional Seminar of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held at St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 21 to 23 May 1997, have authorized me to convey to you the following:
>
> 1. Close to the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism there are still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to be decolonized.
>
> 2. The United Nations has a valid ongoing role to play in the continuing global process of decolonization.
>
> 3. Decolonization, as a major achievement of the United Nations, continues to be one of the principal political programmes of the United Nations.
>
> 4. The proposed administrative reform of the United Nations Secretariat envisaging the transfer of the Decolonization Unit, with all its functions pertaining to the Special Committee on Decolonization and the Fourth Committee, will damage the decolonization programme and diminish its political nature and significance.
>
> 5. The participants of the Seminar urge you to reverse your decision announced on 17 March 1997 and to maintain the Decolonization Unit with all its functions in the Department of Political Affairs and to strengthen its composition and structure."

16. At the 5th meeting, held on 23 May 1997, the participants in the Seminar observed the Week of Solidarity with Peoples of All Colonial Territories Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights (see paras. 34-40 below).

B. Summary of statements and discussions

Member States

17. The representative of Argentina said that the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) affected the territorial integrity of the Argentine Republic and recalled resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Special Committee calling upon the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resolve the sovereignty dispute over the Territory by peaceful negotiations bearing in mind the interests of the population of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). She reaffirmed the position of her Government that the existence of the sovereignty dispute ruled out self-determination and stated that it would be unacceptable that British subjects residing in the Territory decide over the sovereignty dispute to which the United Kingdom was a party. She reiterated her Government's disposition to explore all avenues which could lead to a final solution to the sovereignty dispute.

18. The representative of Grenada said that the United Nations decolonization record was pre-eminent, for it had changed the geopolitical landscape of the entire world. He said that self-determination and independence were a legitimate aspiration and a fundamental right of peoples. He said that it was for the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to determine their future political status through referendums, free and fair elections and other forms of popular consultations, in order to ascertain the wishes and aspirations of the majority. He stated that while independence was a legitimate aspiration and a natural God-given right of peoples everywhere, it carried along with it obligations and responsibilities. He said that the self-determination process was, therefore, a time for hope and hard work in a world of interdependence and complementarity. He concluded by reaffirming his Government's commitment to the process of decolonization and expressed his conviction that the last vestiges of colonialism would vanish.

19. The representative of Indonesia reiterated the position of his Government that the process of the decolonization of East Timor had been interrupted by Portugal when it had allowed the situation to deteriorate and abandoned the Territory. He also said that the people of East Timor had exercised their right to self-determination in 1976, having chosen integration with Indonesia which had been subsequently promulgated as Indonesian Constitutional law 7/75 (1975). He further stated that the people of East Timor had reaffirmed their decision by participating in general elections held in Indonesia in 1982, 1987, 1992 and 1997. He emphasized that for Indonesia the question of East Timor was a non-issue. He reiterated his Government's position that the question of East Timor had been kept alive by Portugal because of its inability to play a constructive role in the decolonization process of East Timor in 1975. He also said that, since 1975, Portugal had been blocking all attempts by Indonesia to reach a solution to the question of East Timor. He reiterated that Indonesia was committed to enhancing the well-being of the territorial population and reaffirmed his Government's support to the efforts of the Secretary-General in seeking a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor.

20. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the achievement of the goals of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism required the cooperation of the administering Powers with the Special Committee. Deploring the absence of the formal cooperation on the part of some administering Powers, he outlined the modalities of ongoing informal dialogue between the two parties which had resulted in the adoption in March 1997 by the General Assembly without a vote of resolution 51/224. He said that the compromise text was not entirely acceptable to all members of the Special Committee, who, however, in the spirit of cooperation went along with it. He also said that the Special Committee expected that the administering Powers would reconsider their position vis-à-vis the Special Committee and re-establish their formal cooperation, facilitate United Nations visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories, participate in the Committee's seminars and encourage the participation of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the deliberations of the Special Committee. He concluded by stating that the Special Committee continued to be under pressure from some administering Powers which were trying to destroy it politically, financially and administratively.

21. The representative of Portugal stated that the question of East Timor continued to be a matter of international concern and in that connection referred to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/63 of 21 April 1997, as well as to the European Union common position on East Timor of 25 June 1996, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States/European Union (EU) Joint Assembly resolution on East Timor of 26 September 1996, the decision of the Ibero-American Countries Summit on East Timor of 23 November, which unequivocally supported the continuation of the good offices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations aiming at finding a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. He reiterated the position of

his Government that, following the 1975 invasion of East Timor by Indonesia, Portugal had been unable to discharge its duties as administering Power vis-à-vis the East Timorese people and to conclude the process leading to the exercise of the right to self-determination. He referred to reports issued by the United Nations human rights bodies and internationally recognized non-governmental organizations and described the human rights situation in East Timor as deteriorating. He also referred to the ongoing dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. He emphasized that the solution could not be found and would not be lasting without the association of the people of East Timor. He reaffirmed that the Government of Portugal was striving for the completion of the decolonization process of the Territory with full respect for the legitimate rights of the people of East Timor as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council . He concluded by calling upon Indonesia to accept the facts and realities pertaining to the question of East Timor.

22. The representative of Spain said that the right to self-determination was not an absolute right and that it was linked to questions of respect for national unity and the territorial integrity of States as enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations. He reaffirmed the validity of the Treaty of Utrecht to the question of Gibraltar. He said that the Treaty of Utrecht clearly stipulated that Gibraltar could be either British or Spanish and that no other options were available for its future status. He stated that the population of Gibraltar was not indigenous, which excluded the application of the principle of self-determination to the question of Gibraltar. He reiterated the position of his Government that any solution to the question of Gibraltar should be based upon the principle of territorial integrity. He reaffirmed the commitment of his Government to the Brussels process and the continuation of the Anglo-Spanish talks regarding Gibraltar aimed at the restoration of Spanish sovereignty over the Territory. He stated that Spain was prepared to take into account all legitimate interests of the territorial population in a definitive negotiated solution to the question of Gibraltar.

Representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

23. The representative of East Timor reaffirmed that the process of the decolonization of East Timor had not been completed since its people had been prevented from the exercise of their right to self-determination by the illegal occupation of the Territory by Indonesia. He stated that the right to self-determination was *erga omnes* and called for the holding of a United Nations-supervised referendum in the Territory. He deplored the deterioration of the living conditions in East Timor owing to the high influx into the Territory of transmigrants from Indonesia. He further referred to continued violations of human rights in the Territory and urged Indonesia to comply with the international conventions on human rights and to withdraw its military presence from the Territory. He concluded by supporting the good offices of the Secretary-General and the appointment of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor and called for continuation of the negotiations between Indonesia and Portugal and of the all-inclusive intra-Timorese dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

24. The representative of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) stated that the Territory had achieved most of the goals set out by the Special Committee, including democratic self-government and sustained socio-economic development. She deplored the absence of reference to the right of self-determination for the territorial population in the annual resolution of the Special Committee entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)" and urged the Special Committee to affirm the principle of self-determination for the Territory at its 1997 session. She also called upon the Government of Argentina to drop its sovereignty claim over the Territory and to allow the people of the Territory to live under a Government of their own choosing.

25. The Chief Minister of Gibraltar stated that the people of Gibraltar had the right to self-determination and in that connection requested the Special Committee to reaffirm that right and to call upon the administering Power and Spain to include the Government of Gibraltar as a third party in the negotiations within the Brussels process. He further said that Spain should drop its sovereignty claim over Gibraltar, thus allowing the people of the Territory to determine their future in conformity with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). The Chief Minister reaffirmed the position of the territorial Government that Gibraltar should not be marginalized in the European Union or denied its socio-economic and political rights or the benefits of European Union membership.

26. The representative of Guam said that, in the opinion of the territorial Government, the administering Power had failed to implement in full its obligations vis-à-vis Guam since during the last decade it had been treating the issue of Guam exclusively within its internal constitutional and legal

frameworks. He also provided an overview of the situation in Guam with respect to the land transfer issues and reaffirmed the right of the Chamorro people to self-determination as endorsed by the people of Guam in the Draft Guam Commonwealth Act in 1987.

27. The representatives of Montserrat said that the volcanic activity in the Territory had a significant impact on political, economic and social developments in the Territory. They stated that the administering Power had allocated £ 25 million in assistance to Montserrat and called upon the specialized agencies and international organizations of the United Nations system to establish special programmes of assistance to the Territory. It was, however, the feeling of the people of the Territory that the volcanic crisis should not hinder the evolution of Montserrat towards self-determination. It was therefore important that the administering Power in cooperation with the territorial Government pay more attention to the political education of the people of Montserrat regarding the process and available options of self-determination.

28. The representative of Tokelau said that the continued constructive cooperation between the Territory and its administering Power had been contributing to the evolution of Tokelau towards the exercise of the right to self-determination. Tokelau was seeking its own solution regarding self-government and self-determination. There had been general improvement in the Territory's socio-economic conditions, particularly in communications, public finance, and quality of public service. He also said that Tokelau had started to enact its own legislation, thus practising becoming a nation.

29. The representatives of the Turks and Caicos Islands said that there was lack of adequate visible development of the process of self-determination in the Territory. They stated that there was the political will of the territorial leaders for a more advanced Constitution which would enable an orderly transfer of power to the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. They said that the administering Power should accelerate the process of equipping and preparing the people of the Territory to evaluate properly the available options of self-determination and, with that in view, emphasized that the advancement of the political, economic, social and educational institutions in the Territory was of paramount importance.

30. The representative of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamma y de Rio de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) stated that the existing impasse in the implementation of the United Nations settlement plan was a result of the transmigration campaign undertaken in Western Sahara by the Government of Morocco aimed at including Moroccan citizens as eligible voters in the referendum in the Territory. He said that the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) had been yielding to the position of Morocco in the implementation of the United Nations settlement plan. He called for transparency in the preparatory process leading to the holding of a free and fair referendum in Western Sahara and with that in view suggested the following: the observers of the two parties and of the United Nations should have the right to be present at all stages of the identification process; voter eligibility results should be announced on an ongoing basis; international observers, human rights organizations and non-governmental organizations should have access to the Territory; Morocco should remove the restrictions on the movement of MINURSO personnel and allow non-restricted access to MINURSO headquarters and to the identification centres, restrictions or non-restrictions being the sole responsibility of the United Nations police. He concluded by supporting the appointment of Mr. James Baker as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and expressed his hope that the Personal Representative would contribute to achieving a free, transparent and democratic referendum in the Territory.

Regional organizations

31. The representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat praised the increasing cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM and reaffirmed the commitment of CARICOM members to the principle of self-determination and the United Nations decolonization programme. He said that the participation of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in several CARICOM institutions was a significant factor in their evolution towards self-determination and in that connection welcomed the positive approach of the administering Powers to the increased participation of the Territories under their administration in CARICOM and its institutions. He expressed the concern of CARICOM regarding the trans-shipment of nuclear waste through Caribbean waters by some countries and requested the Special Committee to pursue a solution to that problem. He concluded by emphasizing that the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories could be achieved through promotion, consolidation, increased cooperation and integration of the Caribbean Territories into the Caribbean Community.

Non-governmental organizations

32. All representatives of non-governmental organizations reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations decolonization programme and stated that in the process of decolonization there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination. They emphasized that the process of decolonization had entered its final stage and that the Special Committee should continue to implement new and innovative approaches to the discharge of its mandate. Two representatives referred in particular to the situation in Guam and called upon the Special Committee to continue its consideration of the question of Guam until full implementation of the Draft Guam Commonwealth Act as endorsed by the people of Guam in 1987. One representative described the evolution of New Caledonia towards self-determination within the framework of the Matignon Accords. Several representatives referred to the options and modalities for the exercise of the right to self-determination, emphasizing the importance of adequate political education of the populations concerned and compliance of the processes of self-determination with United Nations norms and practices.

Experts

33. The experts made presentation of their papers dealing with questions of the historic precedents of self-determination of small island Territories and discussed the applicability of those precedents to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. One expert referred in particular to issues of illicit trafficking, money laundering and funds smuggling affecting the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Some experts reviewed in detail political and constitutional developments in Anguilla, Bermuda and the United States Virgin Islands.

C. Week of Solidarity with Peoples of All Colonial Territories Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights

34. At the 5th meeting of the Seminar, held on 23 May 1997, the Chairman of the Special Committee made the following statement:

> "Since 1972, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2911 (XXVII) of 2 November 1972, the Governments and the peoples of the world have been observing annually a Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories. This celebration is in full accord with the purposes and tenets embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and is in conformity with the principles enshrined in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which is contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).
>
> "The success of the United Nations in the field of decolonization is universally recognized. Hundreds of millions achieved self-determination and gained their freedom and independence in the surge of decolonization following the creation of the United Nations. Their membership in the United Nations as sovereign States strengthened the fundamental basis of the international community.
>
> "We remember the history of the struggles against colonialism and pay tribute to all those who took part in them. We remain mindful of the sacrifices that made it possible for hundreds of millions of peoples to achieve self-determination and independence.
>
> "However important the success in the field of decolonization, the task of the complete eradication of colonialism is still unfinished and requires further concerted and determined action on the part of all those involved. There are still peoples who have not been able to exercise their right to self-determination. These are mostly peoples of small island Non-Self-Governing Territories located mainly in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. They are confronted by the problems of their small size and population, geographic remoteness, limited natural resources and vulnerability to natural disasters. Their situations require new and innovative solutions geared towards the implementation of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism launched by the General Assembly in 1988.
>
> "Convinced as we are that in the decolonization process there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, we once again reiterate the legitimacy of all options of self-determination consistent with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) as long as it is ascertained that they are the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. We should continue to exercise flexibility and realism in our endeavours to complete the process of decolonization. The wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be safeguarded when examining once again the options of self-determination available to them.

"We further appeal for the strengthened and continued support of the administering Powers, whose cooperation with the Special Committee is essential for the progress of the Territories towards self-determination. We hope that the informal dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers initiated last year would lead to formal cooperation. We count on the support of the specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system, which should continue to assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in enhancing their standard of living and promoting their self-sufficiency. We count on regional and international organizations, which should explore new avenues to provide the Non-Self-Governing Territories with legal and political opportunities for participating in programmes that relate to their environment and livelihood. We count on support for our efforts from all Member States and non-governmental organizations.

"We hope and believe that our combined, unrelenting efforts will ensure the fulfilment of the promise for freedom, lasting peace, sustained growth and sustainable development for all the peoples of our planet in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations."

35. At the same meeting, the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda stated the following:

"On this occasion of international solidarity with the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, we cannot help but reflect on our own experience here in the Caribbean of the many former Territories which have achieved full self-government through the decolonization process, and how we emerged from that process to become productive and vibrant societies.

"In the most recent publication of *The Courier*, the organ of the African-Caribbean-Pacific/European Union Forum, Antigua and Barbuda was described, for example, as having paradise status. Of course, this is a well-known fact. Most interesting was the recognition by the authors of that prestigious publication that, beyond being just another Caribbean country, Antigua and Barbuda offers its citizens a rather rare privilege for a tropical paradise in the form of a relatively high standard of living. But most relevant to the theme of this most important international day of solidarity was the understanding expressed in the article that the rapid and sustained economic development we have experienced in Antigua and Barbuda is *not* a legacy of colonialism. The sustained economic growth of our twin island State has taken place *since* achieving self-government in 1967, and accelerated *after* the attainment of full independence in 1981.

"I reflect on this experience as a means of demonstrating the power of a self-sufficient and self-reliant people, and as a way of illustrating what a people can do when they handle their own affairs. Freed from the restrictions of dependency, a people will blossom and emerge, and assume its rightful place among the proud peoples of the world.

"While Antigua and Barbuda fully supports the recognized options of integration and free association for the people of some Non-Self-Governing Territories who freely chose that path, we in Antigua and Barbuda and other small island developing States in the Caribbean chose the political option which provides the fullest of internal self-government — that of independence. We recall vividly the difficulties we experienced as a non-independent Territory owing in large measure to the fact that an administering Power, regardless of all its good intentions, could not fully comprehend the nuances and complexities of a dependent people, and can, as a result, implement policies which may produce the opposite effect of what was intended. This awareness, borne out of our own colonial experience and the subsequent successful self-determination process, is why Antigua and Barbuda must manifest its solidarity with peoples still under such dependency arrangements. We will continue to support initiatives towards accelerating the self-determination process in accordance with the views of the peoples themselves.

"For those in our region who will choose the path of full integration with equality, or others who have chosen a true form of free association, we support the freely determined decision of the people and will work with those entities in furthering economic and technical cooperation among the countries and the territories of the wider Caribbean region. And for those who will choose the ultimate form of self-government, that of independence, we will enthusiastically welcome you as equal partners in the regional economic social and political integration process.

"It is fitting that on this day of solidarity with the people of dependent territories the international community should strongly reaffirm its support for the

process of decolonization and full self-government and dignity, whatever path is freely chosen by the people, in a legitimate act of self-determination.

"Antigua and Barbuda and other Member States of the Caribbean pledge our continued support through the Decolonization Committee and other international bodies to assist in the acceleration of the process of self-determination as we approach the new millennium and its expected challenges as well as opportunities."

36. Also at the same meeting, the representative of Portugal made the following statement:

"I would like to reiterate that my participation here, on behalf of Portugal, the administering Power of East Timor, must be seen as a clear indication of my country's respect and solidarity for the peoples still under colonial domination. Close to the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, there are still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to be decolonized. The United Nations still has a valid ongoing role in the process of decolonization. Portugal will continue to cooperate with the Special Committee on Decolonization towards this endeavour."

37. The following statement was made by the representative of Indonesia:

"Fifty-two years ago, in the spirit of the eradication of colonialism, we the people of Indonesia, on 17 August 1945, declared our independence to liberate ourselves once and for all from the rule of the colonial Power in our land.

"In accordance with our true desire to eradicate colonialism, the peoples of Africa together with their brothers in Asia issued the Bandung Declaration in 1955 to demonstrate to the world our solidarity with those countries still living under colonial rule. Our declaration from Bandung is still valid in terms of how important it is for the peoples to liberate themselves from all aspects of repression and exploitation, especially in implementing their right to self-determination for the advancement of their populations in the social, political and cultural fields.

"We as a newborn nation desire to walk hand in hand with our neighbours in achieving a better understanding of how to fulfil our future. Therefore, in Belgrade, in 1961, we formed the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to identify ourselves as distinct from the two super-Powers. We believe that the question of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries is still relevant to the current post-cold war situation.

"As we approach the end of the millennium, and in particular of the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the spirit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries persists as decolonization is still the main goal of our work. It is the view of my delegation that in these times of globalization we must align ourselves with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. As you know, resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) of 1960 should be adjusted to the new realities in accordance with the specific nature of the situation, in which not all Territories should implement the provisions as originally enshrined in the above-mentioned resolutions.

"As I mentioned earlier with regard to the matter of globalization, we must devote serious consideration to the idea of the sustainable development of the economic entities of the Territories rather than being concerned with implementing the classic form of decolonization in which the people themselves cannot sustain themselves. We should focus on the spirit of cooperation in the economic, cultural, educational, environmental and human resources spheres, which can be implemented without any delay. These are the fields into which we must put all our efforts, rather than pursuing futile causes.

"In three years we shall come to the end of this century. I appeal through this Seminar for concerted action to be taken to increase and develop human resources as well as the environmental, social and economic resources. It is better for us to focus the debate on the politics of development rather than arguing about the political status of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, which in reality is not the main focus of the Territories concerned."

38. The following statement was made by the representative of the World Health Organization (WHO):

"Seven of the 17 listed countries fall within the region served by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Building on the lengthy and wide experience PAHO has had working with the several other countries within the region which have since gained independence and notwithstanding the many challenges, PAHO will continue its role of strengthening the capacity of the countries to deliver the health care appropriate to maintaining or achieving a healthy population. WHO/PAHO will continue to use innovative approaches to support the priorities

defined by countries through technical cooperation, human resources development, capacity-building, resource mobilization and strengthening of national and regional institutions."

39. The representative of the Caribbean Community Secretariat, Mr. Claude Hogan, made the following statement:

"On this day of solidarity with the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) expresses its fullest support for the process of self-determination for the last remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories as they continue to proceed along the path to achieve total and full internal self-government.

"CARICOM is particularly aware of the concerns of seven of the remaining territories which are in our region, and as the Right Honourable Prime Minister Lester Bird of Antigua and Barbuda indicated in his opening address to this regional seminar and in addressing the political, economic and social conditions in the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories, CARICOM has created the necessary linkages for many of these Territories to participate in the functional cooperation programmes of the Community in recognition of the practicality of involving the wider region in our discussions in areas of health, education, science, labour, environment and more.

"CARICOM views the process of self-determination of the last remaining Territories as paramount to the natural evolution of the wider region, even as the region continues to deepen its links with the hemisphere within the framework of such initiatives as the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States and the ongoing negotiations aimed at the creation of a hemispheric free trade area by the year 2005.

"The Community's profound interest in the achievement of colonial countries and peoples is evidenced by, *inter alia,* the inclusion of non-independent Territories in all categories of its membership as observers, Associate Members, and even as a full member; and also the CARICOM initiative to create the Association of Caribbean States as an inclusive body providing for the participation of all political entities of the region regardless of their constitutional status.

"CARICOM is of the view that, regardless of the political and constitutional distinctions between the peoples of the independent States and the non-independent Territories of the Caribbean, the basic fact remains that the Caribbean is one people: as one of our beloved Caribbean elders Marcus Mosiah Garvey would say, we are of 'One God, one aim, and one destiny'.

"This awareness of the unity of the Caribbean people, which is fully recognized by the Community, is being translated into increased interaction with the United Nations that would assist in our mutual aims of achieving the fullest measure of self-government for the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. I refer in support of this view to the milestone achieved by the Community in gaining observer status to the United Nations within the last three years and the convening at United Nations Headquarters on 27 and 28 May 1997 of the first general meeting between representatives of the CARICOM Secretariat and its associate institutions and representatives of the United Nations system. This meeting will seek to enhance cooperation between the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the CARICOM Secretariat.

"In this connection, CARICOM stands ready to assist the United Nations, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on CARICOM cooperation, in providing the necessary studies, analyses and other data that may be of assistance to the international community in assessing the prevailing economic, political and social conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories of our region. This would be in furtherance of a more comprehensive understanding of the uniqueness of the individual small Territories — in many instances, the smallest of the small — as they progress towards self-government.

"In summary, as the immediate past Chairman of the Caribbean Community, the Honourable Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Mr. Lester Bird, has indicated, 'our [regional] experts are in the best position to comprehend the intricacies and peculiarities of the diverse territorial arrangements and to articulate the needs and concerns of the people of our respective regions' and, more particularly, those of the Caribbean region."

40. Statements were also made by representatives of Montserrat and the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

41. At its 6th meeting, held on 23 May 1997, the participants, on the recommendation of the Drafting Committee, adopted without a vote the present report, containing the following conclusions and recommendations:

The Seminar concludes that:

1. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) is not yet complete as long as there remain Non-Self-Governing Territories that still have to exercise their right to self-determination;

2. In the process of decolonization, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination which is also a fundamental human right, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and as enunciated in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

3. The United Nations has a valid ongoing role in the process of decolonization;

4. The mandate of the Special Committee is a major political programme of the United Nations and, therefore, Member States need to remain vigilant against all attempts to limit, jeopardize or eliminate its activities on the grounds of administrative reforms or by means of financial mechanisms;

5. In the present stage of global developments, there is a need for identifying and implementing innovative practical and pragmatic approaches in the search for a specific solution to each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the populations concerned and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

6. Specific characteristics of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories should in no way prevent their populations from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV);

7. All available options for self-determination are valid as long as they are in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned and in conformity with the clearly defined principles contained in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV);

8. The views of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be ascertained through legitimate acts of self-determination under the supervision of the United Nations;

9. Continued examination of the spectrum of options of self-determination by all parties concerned and dissemination of relevant information among the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are important elements in achieving the goals of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Plan of Action;

10. Any negotiations to determine the status of a Non-Self-Governing Territory must not take place without an active involvement and participation of the people of that Territory;

11. The exercise of self-determination in the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be preceded by an education campaign to enable the peoples concerned to make their choice in full awareness of all available options in full conformity with the principles of self-determination embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and other relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

12. The United Nations, and in particular the Special Committee, should actively participate in monitoring and observing the evolution of the Non-Self-Governing Territories towards self-determination, as well as certify to the General Assembly the compliance of these processes with the norms and practices of the United Nations;

13. While recognizing the ongoing informal consultations between some administering Powers and the Special Committee, those administering Powers should re-establish their formal cooperation with the Special Committee, facilitate the United Nations visiting missions to the Territories under their administration to provide adequate up-to-date information on political, economic and social developments in their respective Territories with particular emphasis on their constitutional, political and socio-economic evolution towards exercise of the right to self-determination;

14. The administering Powers should respect and pay close attention to the views and the political will of the elected territorial Governments in order to safeguard the interests of the peoples of the Territories as called for by the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

15. The continued and sustained socio-economic advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories is an important element of self-determination;

16. Programmes of socio-economic assistance provided to the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the administering Powers, as well as by the specialized agencies and international organizations of the United Nations system and by regional and subregional organizations should be increased and streamlined in conformity with the needs and wishes of the peoples of the Territories;

17. Activities of foreign economic interests in the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be closely and effectively monitored by the peoples of those Territories and the territorial Governments in order to ensure that they conform to the wishes and needs of the populations concerned and contribute to their socio-economic advancement towards self-determination;

18. The announced plans of the administering Powers to close or downsize some of their remaining military bases and facilities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be carried out by the administering Powers in cooperation with the territorial Governments with a view to preventing or mitigating the possible negative effects of socio-economic and environmental consequences of those closures;

19. The vulnerability of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to illicit trafficking, money laundering and funds smuggling necessitates that the administering Powers in cooperation with the territorial Governments establish effective mechanisms for the protection of the vulnerable socio-economic structures of the Territories from those activities;

20. The Special Committee should assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in becoming included in the programmes and projects of the United Nations system, particularly in those envisaged under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and other programmes designed to assist small island developing States;

21. All parties concerned should encourage participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in regional and subregional organizations, particularly those in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, with a view to assisting their socio-economic advancement towards the exercise of the right of self-determination;

22. Regional organizations should strengthen their cooperation with the Special Committee with the aim of providing a valid contribution to the goals of the International Decade for Eradication of Colonialism;

23. The United Nations should explore avenues to grant observer status to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Special Committee on Decolonization;

24. The Secretariat of the United Nations and in particular the Department of Public Information should disseminate information on the activities of the United Nations on decolonization, by all available means, including through the Internet;

25. The Special Committee should facilitate direct and regular consultations between the elected Governments of the Territories and relevant United Nations organizations and bodies;

26. The Special Committee should review the situation in the Territories with respect to the status of the people's ownership, control and

disposal of their land and marine resources and report to the General Assembly on the situation;

27. The United Nations should commit the necessary human and financial resources to assist in the processes of an act of self-determination by the peoples of the Territories;

28. The Special Committee should note that the people of Bermuda have not yet exercised their right to self-determination in conformity with the norms and practices of the United Nations, since only 57 per cent of the voters participated in the Bermuda Independence Referendum held on 16 August 1995;

29. The Special Committee should continue to encourage the Governments of Portugal and Indonesia to continue their efforts, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to find a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor; to support the all-inclusive intra-East Timorese dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations; also to support the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for East Timor aiming at giving a new impetus to the Secretary-General's good offices;

30. The Special Committee should continue to encourage the resumption of negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland aiming at finding a solution to the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) taking into consideration the interests of the population of the Territory in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

31. The Special Committee should continue to encourage the ongoing negotiations between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Spain within the Brussels process, aiming at achieving a solution to the question of Gibraltar in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

32. The Special Committee should continue to protect and preserve the inalienable rights of the Chamorro people of Guam, including their right to self-determination as endorsed by the people of Guam in the Draft Guam Commonwealth Act in 1987. The administering Power should fulfil in full its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and therefore should expeditiously conclude negotiations with the territorial Government on the Draft Guam Commonwealth Act in the manner endorsed in 1987; as well as put effective control over the influx of immigrants to Guam;

33. The Special Committee, aware of the serious socio-economic crisis in Montserrat brought on by volcanic activity, should encourage organizations within the United Nations system to establish special programmes of assistance to the Territory. The administering Power should respect the opinion of the territorial representatives that some of the responsibilities currently exercised by the Governor, including the matters of civil service, law and order, audit, external affairs and international finance, should be constitutionally vested in the territorial Government and consequently amend the Montserrat Constitutional Order 1989. The administering Power should increase its programmes of socio-economic and humanitarian assistance to Montserrat to enable it to achieve economic stability, thereby removing one of the major obstacles to self-determination;

34. The Special Committee should bear in mind the ongoing political debate in Puerto Rico regarding the issue of its political status and the diversity of opinions of various social and political groups on the issue, and with that in mind should continue to avail representatives of Puerto Rico of the opportunity to present their views to the United Nations. The Special Committee should continue to monitor the related developments in Puerto Rico;

35. The relationship between Tokelau and its administering Power, New Zealand, has been conducive to the increased level of internal self-government and enactment of the territorial legislation, bringing the people of Tokelau closer to the exercise of the right of self-determination;

36. The Special Committee should take into consideration the political will of the people and Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands, in particular regarding the orderly transfer of all governing powers to the people of the Territory

to enable them to exercise their right of self-determination. The administering Power should accelerate the evolution of the Territory towards self-determination, and with that in view should ensure the advancement of the political, economic, social and educational territorial institutions;

37. The Special Committee, aware of its responsibility towards the decolonization of Western Sahara, should continue to monitor closely the ongoing process towards a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara and will continue to consider this question until the people of Western Sahara have fully exercised their legitimate right of self-determination. The Special Committee should continue to support the settlement plan, already accepted by the two parties, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, with a view to implementing it in a fair, honest and transparent manner;

38. The Special Committee should note with satisfaction the active participation in the Seminar of Portugal in its capacity of administering Power and call upon other administering Powers to do so;

39. The Special Committee should express its appreciation to Argentina and Spain for their active participation in the Seminar and encourage other Member States to continue to cooperate with the Special Committee.

42. At the same meeting, representatives of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) expressed their reservations regarding paragraphs 31 and 30, respectively of the conclusions and recommendations (see para. 41 above). Also at the same meeting, representatives of the Governments of Non-Self-Governing Territories presented a statement which is reproduced *in extenso* in annex IV to the present report.

43. At the 6th meeting, on 23 May 1997, the participants in the Seminar adopted by acclamation a resolution of appreciation to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda (see annex V).

Annex I

Statement by The Honourable Lester Bryant Bird, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, on 21 May 1997

It is indeed an honour to welcome you to Antigua and Barbuda, and a distinct pleasure for me to address this opening ceremony of the 1997 Caribbean Regional Seminar to review the political, economic and social conditions in the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories. We are especially pleased that the United Nations accepted our invitation to host this most important forum which is so critical to an international understanding of the dynamics of the contemporary self-determination process and future advancement of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in our region and beyond.

I have been advised that this is the latest in a series of such annual sessions which alternate between the Caribbean and Pacific regions to provide States Members of the United Nations with a first-hand account of conditions in the Territories, and to hear from the people of the Territories themselves of their successes, as well as their difficulties, in proceeding along the path towards full self-government and dignity. We in Antigua and Barbuda support this "hands-on" approach in reviewing the situation in these Territories from a regional perspective, since 7 of the remaining 17 Territories are in the Caribbean, and are our close neighbours and partners in regional development.

Our long-standing relationship with the British dependent Territory of Montserrat is a prime example of the interrelatedness of the people of this region, irrespective of the level of constitutional advancement. Regional Governments continue to work closely with the people of Montserrat as they cope with the uncertainty caused by the destructiveness and potential devastation of an active volcano which has resulted in the mass relocation of a large segment of the population away from the danger zone. This has caused significant economic and personal dislocation, especially affecting the most vulnerable in any society – the elderly and the young.

Under these most difficult conditions, Montserrat faces an uncertain future. But the will of the people is strong, and in the final analysis, it will prevail. I take this opportunity to call upon the international community, including those United Nations technical agencies present at this Seminar, to provide the necessary assistance to Montserrat during this period of recovery, and as it proceeds on a future development strategy.

Antigua and Barbuda and the other independent States of the Eastern Caribbean also enjoy significant links with other Caribbean Territories as well. Along with Montserrat, the Territory of Anguilla shares our Eastern Caribbean dollar as its official currency and both are members of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. Many of these Territories also participate in other regional institutions. Montserrat enjoys full membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and in the wide Caribbean Community (CARICOM), while the British Virgin Islands maintains associate membership in both bodies. OECS also includes Anguilla as an associate member, and CARICOM has extended associated status to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The United States Virgin Islands, whose representative is present at this Seminar, chairs the Working Group of Non-Independent Caribbean Countries of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). Many of these same Territories were also represented at the recently concluded Caribbean/United States Summit held in Barbados, where many regional issues were discussed. All of the non-independent Territories of the Caribbean have deep and abiding ties of culture, family and economy with the independent countries of the region. They are our fraternal islands and we take a strong interest in their welfare. This Seminar will help to determine how we, and the wider international community, can help.

We in Antigua and Barbuda strongly support the continued participation of these Territories in regional institutions as a natural function of our Caribbean integrated process, and as a contribution to the economic, social and constitutional development of these Territories.

As in the case of regional institutions, the United Nations has a special part to play in the future development process of these Territories. The decolonization of over 80 Territories since the Second World War is evidence of the effectiveness of such a role. The most recent achievement was the successful United Nations action that led to the independence of Namibia with the required investment of the necessary resources to ensure that outcome. The role of the United Nations in Western Sahara is illustrative of the present-day commitment by the international community where substantial human and financial resources are being provided to address an issue of self-determination.

In fact, many countries throughout the Caribbean have benefited from the efforts by the United Nations in monitoring the constitutional development process until the full measure of self-government had been achieved. This goal was accomplished by either the attainment of independence, as in the case of 13 of our CARICOM States, by the choice of free association, as in the case of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, or by full integration, with the example in our region of the French overseas departments of Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana.

These advancements in regard to political status have been successful, in large measure, because of the adherence to the parameters of self-determination set forth by the United Nations General Assembly in its landmark resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960, which defined these three legitimate political options based on the fundamental principle of equality.

Antigua and Barbuda strongly believes that the principles clearly set forth in resolution 1541 (XV), along with those in its companion resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, are as relevant to our small island Non-Self-Governing Territories today as they were to the former Territories in Africa, the Pacific and here in the Caribbean where Territories benefited from a strong United Nations presence in their self-determination process.

The fact that most of the remaining Territories are small islands does not mean that these same principles of equality should not continue to apply to them. Thus, while the international community must remain flexible in its approach to assisting these Territories as they progress, we must ensure that their political status options remain in conformity with the legitimate choices of equality identified in resolution 1541 (XV), lest we inadvertently legitimize the very non-self-governing arrangements which we seek to redress. And while Antigua and Barbuda has consistently supported the principle of United Nations reform, we strongly urge that the drastic downsizing of United Nations Secretariat services in the area of decolonization be carefully reviewed by the Secretary-General, or there will continue to be insufficient resources to finish the task of assisting the self-determination process in these few remaining years of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Indeed, the lack of resources has already resulted in the non-implementation of key elements of the plan of action of the International Decade. Of particular note are the "review of the impact of the economic and social situation on the constitutional and political advancement of Non-Self-Governing Territories", and the "periodic analyses of the progress and extent of the implementation of the [Decolonization] Declaration ... in each Territory". It is difficult to fathom how the plan of action of the International Decade can be successfully carried out without benefit of these two comprehensive studies and analyses. Antigua and Barbuda is of the view that these studies would best be undertaken at the regional level, by our own regional experts, several of whom are participating in this Seminar. Our own experts are in the best position to comprehend the intricacies and peculiarities of the diverse territorial arrangements, and to articulate the needs and concerns of the people of the respective regions.

As one of the two newest members of the Special Committee, along with our fellow CARICOM State of Saint Lucia, we will be expanding on this regional approach in the weeks ahead, and will shortly hold consultations with our colleagues from the South Pacific Forum in this connection.

Antigua and Barbuda wishes to commend the international community for its diligence in ensuring the successful transition of the many former Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, the job is not complete, and we must give the same level of attention, with the sufficient level of resources, to the self-determination of our remaining Territories.

I leave with you these ideas as you proceed over the next several days to examine comprehensively the many issues of the present-day self-determination process.

I wish you well in your deliberations, and formally declare open the 1997 Caribbean Regional Seminar to review the political, economic and social conditions in the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Annex II

Statement by Mr. Utula Utuoc Samana, Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

It is my honoured pleasure to extend to you my warmest greetings and to officially welcome you to the Caribbean Regional Seminar on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Allow me at the outset to express our profound gratitude to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for having invited us to hold this Seminar in their beautiful capital, St. John's. It is appropriate, therefore, for me to welcome Antigua and Barbuda as a new member of the Special Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to express the conviction of the members of the Special Committee that Antigua and Barbuda will make a valid contribution to the work of the Committee; and together we will endeavour to achieve the noble goal of eradicating colonialism within the target date as mandated by the United Nations.

Please allow me once again to offer a special welcome to the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, whose participation is extremely important in line with the objectives of this Seminar.

The participation of so many representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and an administering Power, experts, non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies, regional organizations and States Members of the United Nations further strengthens the importance we attach to this Seminar.

This Seminar will devote itself specifically to the assessment of the situations in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories focusing particularly on their existing constitutional status and the stages of the political evolution towards self-determination by the year 2000.

The participants will attempt to evaluate the advancement made so far in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to suggest new courses of action to be taken by the United Nations and its system of organizations to formulate specific measures for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism in various parts of the world by the end of this century.

We are privileged that we have in our midst many distinguished experts and special guests representatives of the non-governmental organizations, who are active in the field of decolonization, and representatives of the academic and media institutions. And above all, we have with us the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Your presence and eagerness gives me confidence that the deliberations of the Seminar will be fruitful and will offer practical and realistic proposals and recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Special Committee on decolonization, since its inception, has been instrumental in bringing about the greatest political transition in global history. The decolonization of many nations in many parts of the world has been made possible by the tenacious efforts and sheer diligence of the work of the Special Committee. The almost universal character and membership of the United Nations today is a result of the legacy of the Committee's historical role and monumental achievements.

The task entrusted to the Special Committee is both fundamental and daunting. That historic role is still relevant today since 17 colonial situations remain – requiring the implementation of the process of decolonization – in which the peoples of dependent Territories are given an opportunity to determine their future political status.

The Committee is seeking suitable ways for the speedy and uncompromised implementation of the Declaration as it applies to all Territories – that are yet to exercise their fundamental human right – i.e., the right to self-determination.

The Declaration solemnly proclaims, among other things, that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental rights in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations. The relevant provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)) recognizes that all peoples have the right to self-determination.

In 1960, when the Declaration was adopted, the General Assembly by its resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 clearly stated that a Non-Self-Governing

Territory could be said to have achieved the right to self-determination through the following manner as it:

"(a) emerged as a sovereign independent State;

(b) freely associated with an independent State;

(c) integrated with an independent State."

Now that the decolonization process under the guidance of the United Nations has entered the final phase, it is important for the Special Committee to receive the enlightened and expert advice of the distinguished participants of the Seminar in order to complete the process in the context of a rapidly changing post-cold-war world.

In our discussions, we should keep in mind the nature of the current international climate and its socio-economic and political impact on the Territories concerned. The current international climate is heavily influenced by the forces of globalization and international economic integration – giving more emphasis to economic considerations as an instrument for sustainability in an interdependent geo-economic world. The geopolitical world of the cold-war era, characterized by ideological and political bipolarism, has ended. In the context of economic globalization, people all over the world are demanding equity, justice and participation, which inevitably poses serious challenges to the traditional notion of State sovereignty and, given the incapacity of many developing States to meet these challenges, consequently leads to the emergence of ethnocentrism, which invariably threatens local peace and international stability.

In the light of new and emerging challenges, faced with conflicting situations, the ordinary citizens of the world yearn for peace and security and aspire towards economic equity and participation in meeting their basic needs and an opportunity to live in comfort. Theirs is a dream for a safer world, a world free from war, hunger and diseases. Their dream cannot be achieved if the people are denied the opportunity to control their own lives. One of the fundamental goals of self-determination is to enable the people to develop their human and technological capacities to a level where they can participate fully in their own socio-economic development, in order to guarantee the continuity of their cultural life and safeguard the long-term sustainability of their livelihood, including the protection of their environment and their natural resources for the use of future generations.

From this perspective, the interests of the small island Territories cannot be allowed to go by default. The United Nations has always been aware of the specific problems of small island Territories, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. In addition to general problems facing developing countries, those island Territories also suffer handicaps arising from the interplay of such factors as geographic isolation, vulnerability to natural disasters, the fragility of their ecosystems, constraints in transport and communications, isolation from market centres, limited internal market, lack of natural resources and serious gaps in technological capacities (in human and material terms). The economies of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories are limited by their heavy dependence on imports and a small range of commodities and further aggravated by the rapid depletion of their non-renewable resources.

Over the years, the General Assembly has reiterated that these characteristics should in no way prevent the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories from exercising their right to self-determination.

While the Special Committee continues to adhere firmly to those principles, it does realize the necessity of new and innovative approaches to the goal of achieving complete decolonization by the year 2000. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for us at this Seminar to review together with all the participants specific circumstances and characteristics of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and to establish our priorities.

During our deliberations we shall pay particular attention to the examination of the options of self-determination available to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this connection, I would like to reiterate the Special Committee's conviction that in the process of decolonization, there is no alternative to self-determination as long as it is ascertained via popular consultations and that it is based on the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

The Special Committee will continue to recommend measures to facilitate a sustained and balanced growth of the fragile economies of those Territories and increased assistance in the development of all the sectors of their economies, with particular emphasis on programmes of diversification. The recommendations of the regional seminars as this one would provide invaluable guidance and insights and would enable the Special Committee to

discharge its responsibilities effectively. In this context, I should like to recall General Assembly resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988 entitled "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism", in which the Assembly declared the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and requested the Secretary-General to submit a plan of action aimed at ushering into the twenty-first century a world free from colonialism. Therefore, the emphasis is now on acceleration of the decolonization process.

In recognition of the fact that a seminar such as this provides an effective mechanism to interact with the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories as well as with the experts in the field of decolonization, the Committee has been organizing regional seminars in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions since 1990. This is the sixth seminar of its kind.

We have crossed the mid-point of the Decade and it is challenging for the Committee to devise innovative and practical approaches to meet the needs of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories before the year 2000.

As the ultimate goal of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is the full implementation of the Declaration, through the exercise of the right to self-determination, the international community as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations should unite their efforts to assist the peoples still under colonial domination in exercising their legitimate right to determine their future political status. This is our primary objective.

In keeping with the stated objective, the Special Committee believes that the international community, the specialized agencies and the other organizations have a special responsibility to promote the economic and social progress of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Above all, the Special Committee recognizes the importance of eliciting the views of the peoples of the Territories since they have a leading role to play in achieving the goal set by the General Assembly. This Seminar will help us to hear the views of the peoples of the region. On the basis of the information imparted at the Seminar, the Special Committee believes it will be in a better position to understand and respond to the needs of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific.

Before I conclude, I wish to assure this Seminar of the resolute commitment of our Committee to continue to follow closely developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to helping them to achieve the goal set by the General Assembly, to put an end to colonialism by the year 2000.

On behalf of the Special Committee, I wish to thank you for your participation in this Seminar. I am sure our deliberations will be lively and fruitful and that we will be able to make a valuable contribution to the successful implementation of the plan of action and the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism.

Annex III

List of participants

A. Official delegation of the Special Committee of 24

Papua New Guinea	H.E. Mr. Utula Utuoc Samana Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee of 24
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoué Member of the Special Committee
Grenada	H.E. Mr. Lamuel A. Stanislaus Member of the Special Committee
Islamic Republic of Iran	Mr. Jalal Samadi Member of the Special Committee
Sierra Leone	Mr. Otto During Member of the Special Committee
Syrian Arab Republic	Dr. Farouk Al-Attar, Rapporteur of the Special Committee

B. States Members of the United Nations

Argentina	Ms. Silvia Merega
Indonesia	Mr. T. A. Smodra Sriwidjaja Mr. Domingos Policarpio Mr. Abilio Dias Araujo Mr. Odo Manuhutu
Papua New Guinea	Mr. Jimmy Ovia
Spain	Mr. Javier Pérez Griffo

C. Administering Powers

Portugal	Mr. António Gamito

D. Representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

East Timor	Mr. Zacarias da Costa
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	Ms. Sukey Cameron
Gibraltar	The Hon. Peter Caruana Mr. Ernest G. Montado Mr. Perry Stieglitz
Guam	Mr. Leland Bettis
Montserrat	The Hon. David S. Brandt Mr. George Kirnon
Tokelau	Mr. Kelihiano Kalolo
Turks and Caicos Islands	Mr. Oswald Skippings (nominated by the Governor) The Hon. Michael Misick
United States Virgin Islands	Dr. Carlyle Corbin
Western Sahara	Mr. Mouloud Said

E. Experts

Mr. John Benjamin (Anguilla)
Ms. Judith L. Bourne (United States Virgin Islands)
Mr. C. Walter Brown, Jr. (Bermuda)
Mr. Jose Antonio Cousiño (Chile)
Ms. Bernice V. Lake (Anguilla)
Mr. Fred Philips (Barbados)
Mr. Ronald Walters (United States)

F. Non-governmental organizations

Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization	Dr. James A Harris, Sr.
Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico	Ms. Wilma Reverón-Collazo
Congrès populaire	Mr. Yann Céléne Uregei
Guam Landowners Association	Mr. Ronald Teehan
Indigenous Environmental Network	Mr. Ronald F. Barnes Ms. Kekula Bray-Crawford Mr. J. Kalani English Mr. Gary Harrison Ms. Leina'ala Lay Mr. Alberto Saldamando
Organization of People for Indigenous Rights	Mr. Ronald F. Rivera

G. Regional organizations

Caribbean Community	Mr. Claude Hogan

H. Specialized agencies

United Nations Development Programme	Ms. Marjorie Thorpe
World Health Organization	Dr. Carol Boyd-Scobie

I. Government of Antigua and Barbuda

The Honourable Lester Bryant Bird
Mr. Colin Murdoch
Mrs. Ena Thomas
H.E. Mr. James Thomas
H.E. Dr. Patrick Albert Lewis
Ms. Aqeelah Jamillah Akbar
Mrs. Jocelyn Greene
Ms. Ann-Marie Layne
Mrs. Gillian Joseph-Henry
Mr. Roderick Faustin
Ms. Mikael Makeda
Mr. Hilbourne Frank

Annex IV

Resolution on expression of appreciation to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda

The participants in the Caribbean Regional Seminar,

Having met from 21 to 23 May 1997 at St. John's for the purpose of assessing the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly their constitutional evolution towards self-determination,

Having heard the important address by The Hon. Lester Bryant Bird, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda,

Express their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Antigua and Barbuda for providing the Special Committee with the necessary facilities for its Seminar, for the outstanding contribution they have made to the success of the Seminar and in particular for the very generous and kind hospitality and the warm and cordial reception accorded to the participants throughout their stay in Antigua and Barbuda.

Annex V

Statement by the representatives of the democratically elected Governments of Non-Self-Governing Territories

The representatives of the democratically elected Governments of Non-Self-Governing Territories in attendance at the Caribbean Regional Seminar on decolonization (Antigua and Barbuda, 1997) hereby request the inclusion of the following recommendations to be included in, or appended to the recommendations and report of the Seminar:

"1. *Calls upon* the Special Committee to declare that all the Territories on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories have the right to self-determination and that, reflective of the recognized personality of Non-Self-Governing Territories under international law, the Territories call upon the Special Committee to provide for the:

(a) Provision of direct communications between the United Nations bodies and organizations and the elected representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the dissemination of information on and assistance in popular education;

(b) Facilitation of direct and regular consultations between the elected Governments of the Territories and relevant United Nations organizations and bodies;

"2. *Calls* for the facilitation of access by all Non-Self-Governing Territories to relevant United Nations programmes whose objectives are the promotion of the social, educational, technical, environmental, cultural and economic well-being of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to assist in the timely progression of the process of self-determination;

"3. *Calls* for the Special Committee to review the situation in the Territories with respect to the status of the people's ownership, control and disposal of their land and marine resources, and to report to the Secretary-General on the situation;

"4. *Recognizes* that the process of self-determination has not ended, and calls for a renewed effort on the part of the United Nations to commit the necessary human and financial resources to assist in the process of an act of self-determination by the peoples of the Territories;

"5. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to reaffirm the sacred trust assumed by administering Powers under the Charter of the United Nations and to review the status of the implementation of the resolutions on decolonization, including the plan of action, and to report to the General Assembly on the level of implementation;

"6. In view of the reduced level of resources provided to the Secretariat to prepare the required reports on the individual Territories, the establishment of an expert group comprised of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to represent the interests of and articulate the needs of the peoples of the Territories, and to advise the Special Committee on the mechanism for the successful implementation of the process of self-determination."